

Vegetation MOU Working Group
Wednesday, May 29, 2002
9:00 – noon
1807 13th Street, Sacramento

Summary of meeting

Classification crosswalks – Marc Hoshovsky, Todd Keeler-Wolf

Marc has found some money from the Legacy Project to fund a temporary position to help with crosswalks on mapping rules. The group reviewed and approved the job description and arrangements of working in DFG's office. Marc will work with Todd to hire a person.

Todd will send out a revised map-rule-matrix template that the new staff person will work to complete. We revised this at our previous meeting, but did not have a chance to do any further review at this meeting.

Map Unit Design - Brian Schwind

Brian provided a list of map unit design attributes (and associated standards) that the USFS is considering using nationally. California is out in front of other USFS regions in developing these attributes and standards, so no final decisions have been within USFS.

We compared these USFS attributes with the list of map unit design attributes we developed at a previous meeting. Our intent is to identify those "core" attributes that many other agencies are interested in describing in their mapping efforts. The group agreed that all of the attributes currently being described by USFS approach are "core" attributes. USFS and other agencies were willing to consider other additional attributes as draft "core" attributes, subject to formal review. The remaining attributes were identified as "optional" attributes, meaning that not everyone was willing to capture information about them in their vegetation mapping efforts.

We spent considerable time discussing vegetation "cover" to be sure we all understood each other. As a result of the discussion, we had to expand the list of attributes to separate those that dealt with "bird's-eye"-view cover vs "ground-level"-view cover.

Several items still require more discussion before we can assign them to core vs optional attributes. Monica needs to work with the Interagency Wildlife Task Group to better understand what map information is needed related to shrub structure (density, size class, etc.). She will meet with the Group in July and bring back a proposal for us to consider.

Todd will bring in a proposal for dealing with both Disturbance Intensity and Type (formerly Site Quality) and Map Unit Internal Diversity. His proposal should provide some recommendations about how other agencies can capture this information at different mapping scales. Based on our discussion of this proposal, we will determine what attributes would be core vs optional.

The decisions we made are summarized in the attached Map Unit Design Table. After some final clarification from the group, we will send this out for formal agency review to ensure we have broad support for the results.

Miscellaneous Land Cover Types (other than natural vegetation) – Dave Hansen

Based on our last meeting's discussion, we decided that we would all try to map miscellaneous land cover types using the following steps:

1. First map all map units to a natural vegetation classification system.
2. For areas that cannot be classified by natural vegetation, these units should be mapped to a land cover type such as water, barren, grass, shrubs, or trees. We don't want to mix land use categories (agriculture, residential, etc) in this data set.

We recognized that several classification systems exist for mapping these miscellaneous land cover types. Dave presented a report describing the relationships between these systems. We want to use this information to understand the differences in mapping rules for non-natural vegetation. Of the systems described by Dave's paper, only the DOC Farmland Mapping program and the USGS National Land Cover Database for California (Anderson) have quantitative rules for mapping. Other systems, such as CalVeg, MCV, and WHR, contain quantitative rules for mapping these miscellaneous types and need to be examined along with the DOC and USGS systems.

We discussed the challenges in staying with strictly a land cover data approach as compared to also including data on land use. The difference between these is apparent in situations of isolated valley oaks among crop land (is it valley oak savanna or crop land or some valley oak savanna/cropland hybrid?) and heavily forested urban areas (such as parts of downtown Sacramento – is this woodland or urban residential or some hybrid type). We decided that we should examine a dual-system type of approach. Mark Rosenberg, Brian Schwind, Monica Parisi, Todd Keeler-Wolf, and Dave Hansen will work to develop a proposal to show how a dual-system approach might work. Among this work, it would be valuable to show examples of a crosswalk among various mapping rules, much as our previous group did with white fir and black oak.

Hazel Gordon mentioned that Minnesota has developed an approach that might help us solve this dilemma. She will describe it for us at our next meeting.

Web site – Mark Rosenberg

All minutes and other documents are up online at <http://ceres.ca.gov/biodiversity/vegmap.html> . The minutes are a bit rough and cryptic, but so is life sometimes.

Vegetation Map Catalog - Jeff Kennedy

Jeff described the main functions and contents of online vegetation map catalog (see <http://icemaps.des.ucdavis.edu/vegmap/>). The site needs to include more data sets and could be improved with more updated Web capabilities to improve it's usefulness. Marc mentioned that Legacy Project will be doing a more comprehensive survey of regional and local data sets, including vegetation, which will be useful for updating the catalog.

Coastal Dunes habitat labeling on Statewide veg. map – Ray McDowell

Ray reported that several participants at the Legacy Project's Central Coast workshop last week were concerned that dunes were labeled as "barren" areas, rather than sparsely vegetated. This makes it difficult to obtain support for dune conservation, since these areas appear to have no biological value. He recommended that each of our efforts label these areas with a more biologically meaningful name. Todd mentioned that "sparsely vegetated" is a classification name that is currently used.

Next meeting

Location: July 23 9-noon FRAP 1920 20th Street, Sacramento

Draft agenda:

- Progress on Mapping Rules Crosswalk table – Todd
- Map Unit Design - Discuss and resolve issues
 - Shrub structural diversity – Monica
 - Disturbance Intensity and Type – Todd
 - Map Unit Internal Diversity – Todd
- Dual land use/land cover system – Mark, Brian et al.
 - Overview of Minnesota Hazel
- Are we ready for more formal review of our products (mapping standards and map unit design)? – If so, identify next steps for formal review
 - What explanatory text needs to accompany tables?

- Identify roles in developing text